

NEW YORK, THE MODERN BABYLON

The Marriage License Bureau and the Divorce Court—First of a Series of Articles by Nixola Greeley-Smith.



Beginning an Investigation of Our Institutions With Marriage, We Find the License Bureau in a Dingy Basement, Not Nearly So Attractive Quarters as Those Devoted to Divorce.

One Day's Epitome of the Two-Act Drama Which Begins With "Cupid's Alley" and Ends With the Undefended Divorce Court, Where There Is Much Merriment.



NIXOLA GREELEY-SMITH

"I am the Mayor of Modern Babylon." So the chief executive of New York defined his job in a speech made at Albany last week.

Babylon, the ancient, so the prophet Jeremiah tells us, was "a golden cup in the Lord's hand that made all the earth drunken."

For many years New York has held up a glittering cup of luxury and riot to the Western continent, the modern Jeremiahs tell us.

And the Mayor's comparison was apt, not only in the Babylonian spirit of the town he governs but also to its physical aspect. "Oh, thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures!" applies just as well to modern as to ancient Babylon.

Many strangers have come from over seas to study modern Babylon and its institutions, and, going home, have made bright the arrows of their wit and sharpened the spears of their indignation, presenting queer, distorted pictures of us to other cities, or at least the pictures seem queer and distorted to us dwellers in Babylon.

We have heard from the clergy that in ten years since New York will be a territory for foreign missions, as heathen are its ideals and its pursuits.

We have been told that the lives of our men are given to the pursuit of dollars and that the struggle is so ruthless that when Fortune is attained the man is merely a broken captive chained to the chariot wheels of his wife's triumphs.

We have heard that the extravagant demands of our women cause men to stake their souls upon the wheel of fortune.

If all the things that have been said against modern Babylon are true, then it is merely a question of time when we shall assume the image and likeness of our painted ancestors and like shall become, even as ancient Babylon became a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment and a hissing without an inhabitant.

As public spirited Babylonians we prefer to repudiate our unfavorable critics. But what do we know as individuals of the institutions they criticize?

Take marriage, the founding of a household, the real beginning of life in modern Babylon as everywhere else.

MARRIAGE A "NECESSARY PRELIMINARY TO DIVORCE."

A woman of Babylon was asked recently if she believed in marriage.

"Why, yes," she answered nonchalantly. "I think I do. It's still a necessary preliminary to divorce, isn't it?"

The typical marriage in Babylon is a play in two acts. The first takes place in a dingy room in the basement of the City Hall, a long room tiled with tables and with a partition at one end, and reached by a dark corridor and a gloomy stairway—at the City Hall they call the dark corridor "Cupid's Alley," because it leads to the Marriage License Bureau, where all Babylonians must go when they want to wed.

Yesterday was Singer versus Singer. No. 36 was Nightingale versus Nightingale—a case which The Evening World's court reporter classified as a bird of a story.

The word nightingale always brings to my mind those exquisite opening lines of "Parlaria":

It is the hour when from the bough The nightingale's high note is heard; It is the hour when lovers' roses have shed in every nook and cranny.

ANOTHER KIND OF HOUR IN ANOTHER PLACE.

But it was not that sort of hour yesterday during the hearing of Nightingale versus Nightingale.

The plaintiff in this case, which was an undefended suit for separation, was the only witness to see yesterday who seemed to have any perception of the tragic sordidness of the situation.

All the other plaintiffs—husbands putting away their wives, wives seeking to divorce their husbands—were an air of ill-concealed eagerness, of half-suppressed exaltation.

"Gee, whiel I'm glad I'm free," exclaimed an overcaidid young woman upon receiving her decree the other day.

The same feeling, tempered by fear that after all they may fail to obtain their freedom, was with one exception, on the face of every applicant for a divorce I saw yesterday.

DIVORCE DRAMA IS SIMPLE AS WELL.

The divorce drama is very simple. The wife, usually between thirty and thirty-five, testifies to the fact and date of her marriage, and that she has not condoned the offense of the husband.

A friend of the husband testifies to his knowledge of the man's infidelity. Then a process server swears that the husband was duly served by him with the papers in the case.

That's all—next case!

The mills of the gods grind quickly—when it comes to divorce suits.

Rosie Braun, and that there was a Mr. Braun. When she started to identify a photograph of Rosie, Justice Blachoff stopped her.

"Your Honor," said the lawyer for the husband, "we will have to ask for an adjournment so I can take this woman to identify the defendant, who is sick in the charity hospital."

For stoker, "y' poorer, for better or worse NO SWEET SONG FROM THESE NIGHTINGALES.

Fila W. Nightingale, a gentle, charming and very attractive woman, was the plaintiff in the next case. She sought and got separation and alimony of \$50 a week from Charles T. Nightingale, president of the Empire Bottling Company, of No. 43 West Broadway. She was married in 1875 and is the mother of two grown sons.

"Once when I was very ill Mr. Nightingale opened all the windows in the house and the door leading into the street, and I suffered greatly in consequence. Later he suggested that I go away and board with friends. When I returned, he had changed the lock on the door of my home and my key would not open it. I climbed in the parlor window."

"My son received an appointment as Consul in China and I asked Mr. Nightingale's permission to accompany my son there. He agreed and promised to contribute to my support. But I had to borrow my passage money, and during two years in China I received just \$100 from him."

"On my return to New York he suggested that I share an apartment with him and he took me and a Miss Nellie Callahan, whom he introduced as his housekeeper, out to dinner."

"When he asked me if I would have anything to drink, I replied that I would like a glass of sparkling Burgundy, but that it was expensive. Then Miss Callahan interrupted and said Mr. Nightingale was not the man to care about the price of anything, that he spent money more freely than any man she had ever known."

Mrs. Nightingale said that when she went to live at her husband's apartment she always did up his room herself.

She said this so angered him that he would burn sulphur in the room on leaving it in the morning. She ran the house on an allowance and her husband never communicated with her except by written messages left on his bureau of which the following sample was offered in evidence:

"For \$10 per week I want better service, spring water to drink, cigars to smoke, oranges to eat, etc. etc. pressed, June 22, 1911."

All this in June, the month of roses—the month of marriage licenses.

BROKE HIS SIXTY PROMISES TO WED, SUED FOR \$50,000.

Miss Olson Kept Tab on Wiser in Her Diary and Offers It in Evidence.

CHICAGO, Jan. 25.—The diary of Miss Marie Olson is to figure conspicuously in a breach of promise suit filed by her attorney against Daniel W. Wiser.

Miss Olson has sixty promises of marriage, which she alleges were made by Wiser, entered in her diary. She asks \$50,000 for his failure to keep any of them. She accepted him four years ago, and then kept careful count of subsequent promises of marriage he made her, she said. Wiser is said to own valuable Wisconsin lands.

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Weber and Heilbronner Announce their Half-Yearly Sale of "ONYX" HOSIERY AT 29 CENTS A PAIR AT 69 CENTS A PAIR AT \$1.35 A PAIR

McGibbon & Co. Have removed to 1 and 3 West 37th Street Near 5th Avenue. Our friends and patrons are invited to familiarize themselves with the many unequalled advantages and conveniences of the new store and as an inducement to that end a special 10% JANUARY DISCOUNT has been placed in effect in all departments until the end of the month.

ROSENBAUM & CO. 10 & 12 WEST 23RD STREET Extraordinary Announcement FOR FRIDAY ONLY A DOLLAR SALE OF LINGERIE AND MARQUISSETTE WAISTS Suitable for Present & Early Spring Wear

Choice of Any of These Models at 1.00 Former Prices, \$2.00 & \$3.00 High or Dutch neck models, long or short sleeves. Effective trimmings of real Cluny and Val. laces.

Alexander's Shoe Sale PLENTY OF TAN SHOES IN THE SALE just when they are in active demand. MEN'S tan calf, lace and Blucher style, in several toe shapes. \$3.75 WOMEN'S lace and button boots of tan calf—medium and round toes—some storm Bluchers included. \$3.75 \$5 regularly. ANDREW ALEXANDER Sixth Avenue at Nineteenth Street

H-O AMERICA'S FAVORITE BREAKFAST FOR 30 YEARS Means 83 1-3% off the breakfast fuel bill. We cook H-O oatmeal thoroughly for two full hours—you cook it only 20 minutes. Saves you money for fuel—reduces your breakfast work and worry. H-O gives you a breakfast that contains all the nutritious properties of choicest oats—builds health—builds strength—best for every-body At All Grocers

Tested in Every Way. It Remains the Leader TETLEY'S TEA INDIA AND CEYLON

MUST TRY AGAIN TO FIND HUSBAND Man Identified by Mrs. Lena Gene Proves He Never Married Her.

Mrs. Lena Gene of No. 1319 Third Avenue, who in the Court of Domestic Relations yesterday identified Samuel Zicker of No. 121 East One Hundred and Second Street as her long missing husband, failed to-day to appear in court when the case was called.

JEALOUS HUSBAND GONE, AFTER STRANGE STABBING.

Investigation in Hoboken, to-day, threw some light on the stabbing last night of Daniel Wagner a foreman for the Albany Ice Co. at Sixteenth street and Third Avenue, while he was in the company of a woman who described herself as Florence Sullivan, a telephone operator, of No. 131 Grand street, Hoboken. Wagner says he was stabbed by a man he never saw before, who stepped up to him on the street and assaulted him without a word of explanation.

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